



*Chula Vista
Recreation Department*

*Strategic Plan
2003–2008*



A Message from the Recreation Department Director and Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Our Recreation Department's mission is to enrich our community through recreational opportunities and services. The Chula Vista community has seen expansion in the east and redevelopment in the western portions of the city. Only through a thoughtful and careful strategic planning process can the Recreation Department keep pace with this rapidly changing environment and stay "on mission."



During 2003, the Recreation Department and other key city staff members,

Parks and Recreation Commission representatives, and many knowledgeable community leaders gathered together and collectively recommended the strategies and goals included in this strategic planning document. We heard the voices and viewpoints of our many constituents. We accumulated the knowledge and information needed to perform effectively and efficiently in the future. And finally, we reached consensus on our future direction and are now prepared to focus our resources and energies toward our operations in an optimal way.



Most importantly, we now have a unified vision of the critical place that recreation occupies in our social fabric. Our vision is one of a community that achieves learning, self-discovery, balance and essential life skills through recreation.

We extend our sincerest thanks to all of the people who made this process possible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Buck Martin".

Buck Martin, Director, Chula Vista Recreation Department

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Larry Perondi".

Larry Perondi, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission



Why Plan?

Excellent recreation programs are no coincidence. They come about as the result of careful and thoughtful planning that takes into account the goals the department seeks to achieve and the needs of the public who must “buy into” those goals. Our successful strategic planning process has allowed us to realize what we do well and what we have to improve, to have a clear sense of our direction, and has strengthened our ability to engage others in our quest to fulfill our vision.



Acknowledgments

We are indebted to the numerous individuals who offered their time and talent, and who shared their knowledge of our community. This strategic planning process would not have been possible without their collective wisdom and willingness to work together for the benefit of the Recreation Department. Our sincere thanks to the following:

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Statements of Mission, Vision, Values

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

We enrich our community through recreational opportunities and services.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT VALUES

- Integrity—We follow the highest moral standards and are honest and trustworthy.
- Respect—We treat everyone with regard and consideration while appreciating the differences among our patrons.
- Professionalism—We are committed to the highest standards of character and professional behavior.
- Accountability—We take ownership of our decisions and are answerable for our actions.
- Commitment—We have an obligation to our community to provide the best possible recreation services.
- Teamwork—We believe teamwork is at the core of our values—we work cooperatively together for the benefit of all.
- Fun—We believe joyful, exuberant activity is an essential part of life.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is a community that achieves learning, self-discovery, balance, and essential life skills through recreation.

CONSENSUS ON MAJOR ISSUES FACING RECREATION

- More productive and balanced leisure time is needed for a healthy society.
- Resource availability and facility availability, development and design do not meet the increasing demands/expectations of our growing population.
- The benefits and scope of recreation programs are not adequately communicated to decision-makers, collaborators, and the public-at-large.

CITY OF CHULA VISTA

MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to making the community a better place to live, work and play through services that promote PRIDE.

- Public Partnerships and Involvement
- Reliable Infrastructure and Well-Maintained Facilities
- Inviting, Healthy and Safe Environments
- Diverse Cultural, Educational and Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Growth

CITY OF CHULA VISTA VALUES

- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Respect
- Teamwork
- Integrity



CITY OF CHULA VISTA VISION

The City of Chula Vista is committed to build and nurture a progressive and cohesive community which values our diversity, respects our citizens, honors our legacy, and embraces the opportunities of the future.

Executive Summary

The thought and care that the Recreation Department's Strategic Planning Steering Committee brought to this strategic planning process was inspiring to all participants. A revised Department mission statement, and newly created statements of values and vision were among the highlights of new ideas and concepts that emerged from the process.

The City of Chula Vista Recreation Department Strategic Plan 2003-2008 offers a series of broad strategic initiatives (directional statements) and a list of detailed goals under each initiative for the Department



to achieve during the next five years. Recreation Department and other city staff members, plus Parks and Recreation Commission members and community volunteers provided needed perspective and critical input for the information and conclusions presented here.

This strategic plan will help the Recreation Department to focus its priorities in response to a rapidly evolving environment and ensure that staff is working toward shared and agreed-upon goals. The Recreation Department's chances for future success are already greatly enhanced by its commitment to building a vision of success that is shared among all.

METHODOLOGY

In October 2002, Roderick Reinhart, the City of Chula Vista's Manager of Strategic Planning and Fund Development, met with Buck Martin, Recreation Department Director, to assess the Recreation Department's readiness for planning, identify the specific issues to be addressed and decide on whom to involve.

The Recreation Department's chances for future success are already greatly enhanced by its commitment to building a vision of success that is shared among all.

A fourteen-week timetable was created for conducting the public input phase of the strategic planning process. Subsequent meetings were held to discuss the format for the mission/vision/ values retreats and recruitment of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee chair and committee/sub-committee members.

Recreation Department staff prepared documents that addressed the Department's recent history, key organizational events, shifts in priorities over the past fifteen years, and lists of current issues. An analysis of each program area's strengths/weaknesses/ opportunities/ threats (SWOT) was also conducted.

Two half-day mission/vision/values retreats were held on November 25 and December 18, 2002, with the Recreation Department's Director and staff members, Commission members, and key community representatives. A draft of a new mission statement and a list of agreed-upon Departmental values were created by the conclusion of the second retreat. Work was also begun on a vision statement and later meetings of an appointed "vision team" yielded the Department's new vision statement.

Recruitment of members for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and all committees and sub-committees was completed. A survey of Elements of Effectively Managed Organizations (EEMO™) was circulated to all staff members. Results were collected and compiled.

The following committees and sub-committees were identified to serve the Strategic Planning process:

- Center and School Program/Community Outreach Committee
- Aquatics Committee
- Athletics Committee
- Senior Programs, Therapeutics and Inclusion Committee
- Staff and Volunteer Sub-Committee
- Communication/Marketing Sub-Committee
- Facilities and Fields Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee



This strategic plan will help the Recreation Department to focus its priorities in response to a rapidly evolving environment

Recruitment of the Strategic Planning Committee chair and members, and Sub-Committee chairs and members continued. Parks and Recreation Commission chair, Larry Perondi, agreed

to chair the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Management staff members were asked to prepare current program/services overviews and goals documents for subsequent committee review.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee held its initial meeting on January 27, 2003, and reviewed the following information:

- Mission/Vision/Values retreat results
- Department history
- Department organizational chart
- Current program and program evaluation information
- Demographic information and 5-10 year projections
- Results of the EEMO™ survey

Over the ensuing 14 weeks, each of the committees and sub-committees met for three 1.5-hour meetings. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met two additional times on April 3 and May 7, 2003, to review all of the recommendations from the committees and

sub-committees. Each committee and sub-committee drafted recommended Broad Strategic Initiatives and composed goals and suggested action steps that supported their recommended initiatives. All of the draft recommendations were reviewed and edits have been integrated into this final document.

After the third and final Steering Committee meeting, the Recreation Department management team and staff met for the purpose of identifying and prioritizing program and management goals and reviewing possible objectives to be enacted during the next five years.



Strategic Plan Initiatives

AQUATICS

Re-determine program philosophy, priorities, and effectiveness

- Establish user priority for pool use
- Determine aquatic philosophy - recreational and/or competitive
- Determine appropriate number and classification level of aquatic supervisors at each pool
- Broaden opportunities for participation through departmental scholarships
- Continue to make public and staff safety the top priority

Improve Aquatics program delivery

- Investigate and encourage program collaborations with community partners
- Focus on current and future community needs and trends for programs and facilities
- Expand awareness of aquatics programs and use of pools

Determine optimal use for facilities

- Evaluate effectiveness of current schedules and usage
- Investigate how to deliver more programs (must be cost effective) during periods of lower demand
- Solicit alternative activities (e.g., water-polo, kayaking) to reach a broader "audience"

ATHLETICS

Conduct comprehensive communitywide program evaluation

- Evaluate validity of trends determined by present Parks Master Plan surveys
- Examine what athletic programs are offered by other agencies
- Determine current customer base, participation and attendance levels, and existing barriers to participation
- Investigate using multiple survey methodologies, (e.g. different surveys for children vs. adults or parents)

Re-determine program philosophy, priorities, and effectiveness

- Explore new ways to evaluate program effectiveness
- Continue to develop plans for enhancement and expansion of youth and adult athletics and related programs (e.g. physically challenged and seniors)



- Re-evaluate field allocation policies, other related policies, and fees for Youth Sports Council (YSC)
- Re-evaluate field allocation policies, other related policies, and fees for adult sports leagues
- Continue to clarify the direction of athletics to all stakeholders

Optimize program delivery

- Balance revenue enhancements and program growth
- Investigate alternatives for improved maintenance of fields
- Re-evaluate design and uses of current facilities/fields in collaboration with Building and Park Construction and Park Maintenance Division
- Improve collaborations with other agencies
- Determine how citywide youth and adult sports programs can be more geographically based

SENIORS

Reconsider the needs of adults by the following age group: 50-65; 65-85; 85+

- Encourage seniors to maintain physical well being through all recreational programs (athletics, aquatics)
- Continue to provide opportunities that meet the emotional/social needs of the senior population
- Continue to provide opportunities for lifelong learning
- Continue to provide opportunities for seniors to contribute their knowledge and skills to the community

Maximize relationships throughout

community and within the City

- Work with other city departments and community agencies that address senior issues, (e.g. transportation and affordable housing)
- Continue, and increase, intra-departmental partnerships
- Continue to utilize the expertise and resources of the Commission on Aging
- Strategically partner with other community organizations



Photo by Mike Armbrust

Determine future direction of Senior programming

- Re-evaluate the concept/perception of what the term “senior” means, given the aging of the Baby Boomer generation
- Continue to advocate independent living
- Update information about other senior-serving community organizations
- Investigate opportunities for intergenerational programs
- Increase awareness of Norman Park Center as a center for information and referral services



Determine future direction of Therapeutics programming

- Continue to advocate independent living
- Strategically partner with other community organizations
- Expand programs for the physically challenged

THERAPEUTICS

Reexamine needs of therapeutic population by functional ability level

- Review delivery of therapeutic services for developmentally disabled and physically challenged
- Develop a plan or policy addressing services the department will provide to accommodate functional ability needs



Maximize relationships throughout community and within the city

- Work with other city departments and outside agencies that address participants’ issues, (e.g. transportation and affordable housing)
- Continue, and increase, intra-departmental partnerships
- Continue, and expand, existing community partnerships and seek new community partnerships
- Revitalize prior community partnerships

CENTER AND SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Maximize resources and collaborative use of community centers

- Explore feasibility of further integration of facilities, programs and personnel among recreation providers in the community
- Build upon existing relationships with community agencies
- Examine opportunities for more center-based teen, senior, and therapeutics programs
- Coordinate classes and activities department-wide for consistency, efficiency and effectiveness
- Determine how citywide youth and adult sports programs can be more geographically based

Broaden access (language, disability, age groups, ethnicity, teens, transportation, etc.)

- Work with other city departments and outside agencies that could help address participants’ access issues
- Increase youth, teen, senior, and therapeutics programming at city facilities/fields and schools
- Plan for community centers’ programming to be both community oriented and more geographically based (e.g. broad-based and local market based)



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Review staff organization

- Re-examine current staff structure, job responsibilities, and job descriptions (full-time and part-time staff)
- Work with Human Resources on a classification study to examine current staff structure,

salary levels, and job classifications (full-time and part-time staff)

- Develop a staffing model for existing and future recreational facilities, and involve Human Resources, as appropriate

Optimize volunteer program

- Develop a comprehensive volunteer management system in conjunction with Human Resources

Enhance staff training and development

- Explore professional standards and certifications for professional development, safety, and future needs
- Review certification parameters for aquatic personnel (full-time and part-time)
- Develop training needs assessment

COMMUNICATIONS

Determine current recreational interests of community

- Identify current demand/needs
- Determine if data from existing Park Master Plan survey is still valid
- Ensure that park and center designs meet community needs
- Consider new survey tools and methodologies

Improve marketing and communications

- Establish a marketing strategy and plan incorporating needs assessment data
- Advocate and convey to stakeholders the broad societal benefits of recreation programs
- Commit to consistently communicating the mission, vision and values of the Recreation Department to the community
- Strengthen methods of communication to all stakeholders to increase awareness of the needs, benefits, and successes of Recreation

Broaden awareness of what is available in the recreational region, including passive/non-programmed resources (e.g. golf courses, greenbelts, trails)

- Establish priorities and determine ways to increase awareness

FACILITIES AND FIELDS

Maximize citywide resources for recreational purposes (active/passive)

- Make available additional facilities and fields as quickly as possible
- Explore use of temporary sites, including non-traditional usages, (e.g. skate parks)
- Explore feasibility of using utility easements
- Explore increased use of passive/non programmed resources, (e.g. golf courses, greenbelts, trails)

Optimize the use of existing facilities and fields

- Examine percentage of active/passive use areas for possible upgrades of lesser-used areas
- Examine use of technology for improved efficiency and cost savings (e.g. computerized lighting system)
- Develop a schedule of rotating use of city fields and recreational facilities that allows for improved facility maintenance and field rejuvenation ensuring the safety of all participants.
- Re-examine current procedures for field allocations to youth and adult sports teams
- Re-examine joint use of fields and facilities with the two school districts to determine ways to improve service to the public

Explore and implement park development

- Explore opportunities for increasing the availability of parks, and recreational facilities and spaces (new and existing)



- Explore the feasibility and desirability of the development of tournament facilities
- Enhance recreational opportunities and facilities in Western Chula Vista
- Continue to plan and implement the approved recreational facilities and parks in the master planned communities

MANAGEMENT/DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

Commit to the Mission, Vision, and Values and operate the Recreation Department in an ethical and professional manner that is responsive to, and valued by, the public and staff

- Ensure the Recreational management team provides staff with the information, resources, educational



FINANCE

Broaden revenue opportunities

- Explore alternative sources of revenues/support, (e.g., grants, fundraising, concessions, vending machines)
- Explore opportunities for collaborative funding requests
- Increase revenues from non-General Fund sources

Align financial practices, reporting capabilities and expenditures with Recreation Strategic Plan

- Broaden staff involvement and understanding in financial planning and evaluation
- Identify both costs and benefits of programs
- Develop balanced guidelines for the extent of cost recovery possible for department programs

Preserve departmental budgetary resources

- Maintain Recreation Department as an essential city service
- Advocate to ensure continued city financial support and improve public and decision-makers' support for Department's programs

opportunities, support, and direction to meet the needs of the public

- Align Department initiatives and goals with the city's strategic themes
- Continue to commit to outcome-based program management and a performance measurement system
- Improve program efficiency
- Commit to advance planning and ongoing assessment
- Be more customer focused
- Continue to provide safe and secure programs and facilities to the public by a well-trained staff
- Develop a clear organizational structure that supports decision-making, teamwork, risk taking, problem solving and innovation
- Develop a decision-making process and structure that supports decisions being implemented
- Enhance lines of communication and support the flow of information and feedback between and among managers and staff
- Determine the role of the revitalized Friends of Parks and Recreation non-profit organization and provide overall direction
- Seek new "win-win" collaborations and strengthen existing relationships
- Revisit city's administrative distinction between parks and recreation
- Continue to commit to universal accessibility

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